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LIBRARY JOURNAL®

OCTOBER 15 1991

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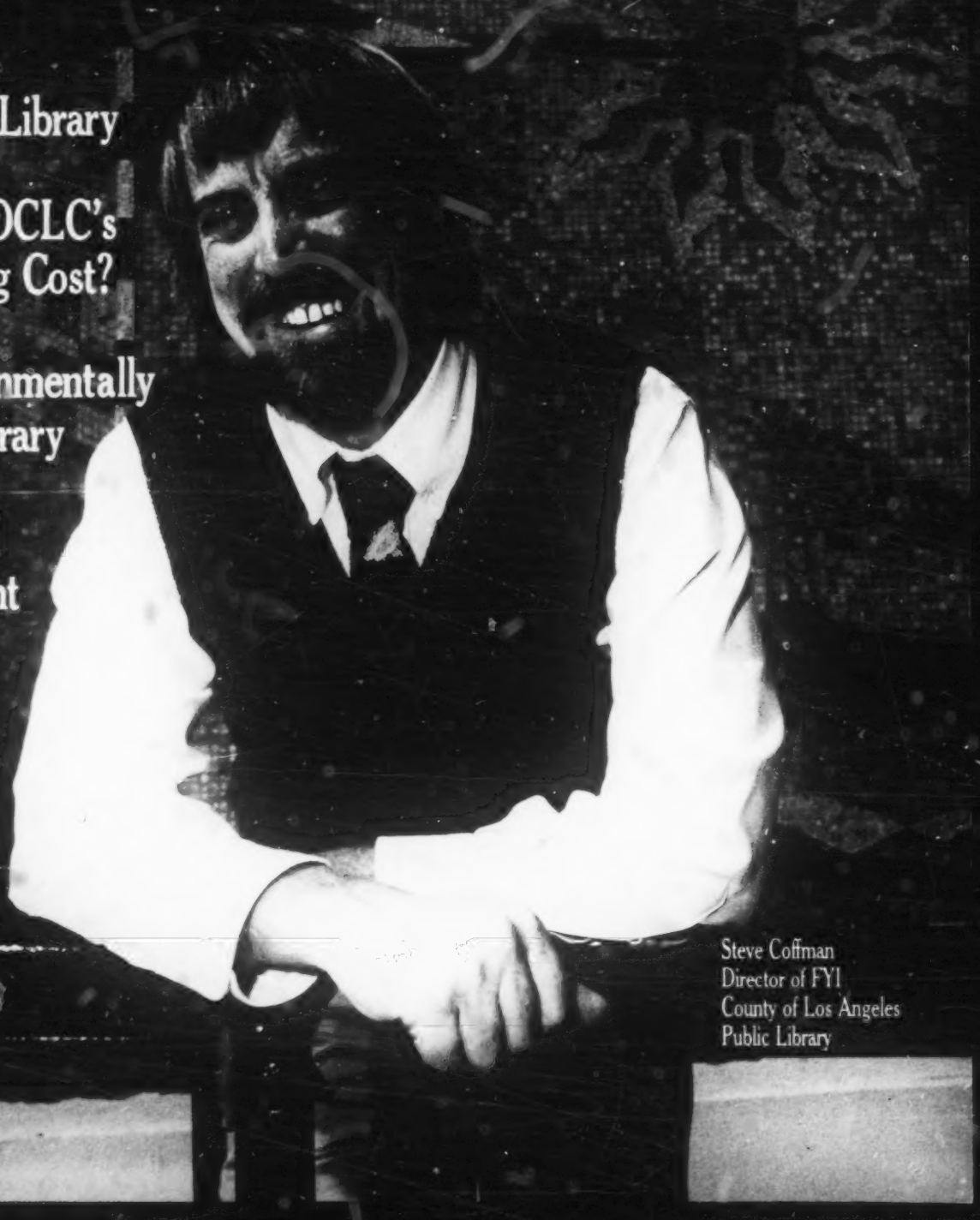
Doing It for Money: Libraries That Charge

The Bionic Library

What Will OCLC's New Pricing Cost?

The Environmentally Correct Library

The MASH Management Model



Steve Coffman
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VOL. 116 No. 17

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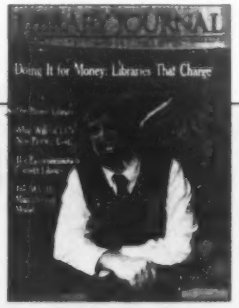

Steve Coffman, along with coauthor Helen Josephine, sees charging fees as a means of expanding the range and type of services offered to patrons. Still, should libraries be "Doing It for Money"? See page 32.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HERMAN KOKOJAN

October 15, 1991

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Mary Brenner

NEWS

BY JUDY QUINN & MICHAEL ROGERS

Study Shows Hospital Libraries Save Lives

Ammunition in the fight to reinstate required medical libraries, the survey shows library information was often the key to proper diagnosis and treatment

In 1986, the U.S. federal government eliminated the regulation that required that hospitals maintain a medical library to be eligible for Medicare and Medicaid funding. When a cost-cutting representative of New York's Department of Health recently demanded proof of the value of hospital libraries, New York hospital librarians went out and got it.

Working with Rochester-area medical librarians, Joanne G. Marshall from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Library and Information Sciences surveyed 208 physicians at 15 hospitals in the five-county Rochester region. The results: 80 percent said information provided by medical libraries led them to handle some aspect of the care of their patients differently than they would have otherwise.

Surprising to Marshall was the high percentage—19 percent—who said that library information contributed to their ability to avoid patient mortality. In other words, libraries save lives.

Impact of Hospital Library Information on Clinical Decision Making
(Changes Reported by Physicians)

Changes	All (208)	Physicians, % Residents (52)	Rural (43)	Urban (113)
Handled situation differently	80.4	88.5	86.0	71.7
Changed diagnosis	29.3	38.5	14.0	31.0
Changed tests	50.5	59.6	55.8	44.2
Changed drugs	45.2	42.3	48.8	45.1
Reduced length of stay	19.2	25.0	18.6	16.8
Changed advice to patients	71.6	73.1	65.1	73.5
Avoided hospital admisssion	11.5	7.7	14.0	12.4
Avoided patient mortality	19.2	28.8	14.0	16.8
Avoided hospital-acquired infection	8.2	15.4	7.0	5.3
Avoided surgery	21.2	30.8	16.3	18.6
Avoided additional tests and/or procedures	49.0	67.3	37.2	45.1

JAMA takes note

Marshall and her colleagues scored the coup of publishing their findings in the September 4, 1991 letters column of the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* (*JAMA*), the first step on the way to publicizing the need to reinstate the federal regulation. Marshall, along with Robert J. Joynt, an M.D. at the University of Rochester Medical Center, and Lucretia W. McClure, from the Edward G. Miner Library, University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry and past-president of the Medical Library Association, claimed "the purpose of our letter is twofold: to alert physicians to the continuing threat to hospital library services posed by regulatory changes and to present some new evidence about the nature and extent of the library's contribution to patient care." They also revealed more surprising data: that the surveyed physicians rated library information services higher than other information sources such as diagnostic imaging, laboratory tests, and discussions with colleagues. Data were also broken down by type of physician surveyed: active physicians in urban hospitals; residents in urban hospitals; and rural physicians served by a circuit librarians program. (For an outline of the survey results, see chart above.)

A local lobby grows

The Rochester-area librarians are also actively promoting the data: the Rochester Public Library recently sponsored a talk by obstetrician G. Theodore Ruckert, who described how his hospital library helped uncover a rare catastrophic complication of pregnancy so unusual most obstetricians will never encounter it in their careers. Library research helped discover this rarity and its treatment.

Marshall has just been given a grant by the Special Libraries Association to study corporate CEOs' perception of corporate library service. She's hoping this survey will reveal similarly high marks for value and quality of library information. □

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